

Intensive viewing has the potential for at least three effects on the growing brain, any of which could interfere with a child's natural potential for intelligence and creativity; (1) it may reduce stimulation to left-hemisphere systems critical for development of language, reading, and analytic thinking; (2) it may affect mental ability and attention by diminishing mental traffic between the hemispheres; (3) it may discourage development of "executive" systems that regulate attention, organization, and motivation. Without a solid research base, we can take only a speculative look at each of the three.

Mental and Physical Effort--or Withered Brains

Because of its late maturation, the corpus callosum may be extremely vulnerable to lack of practice. After an initial spurt of growth during the first two years of life, it probably continues to develop at a slow, relatively steady pace until somewhere between ages eight and fourteen. As the connections mature, the youngster must practice using them--through physical and mental activity. If the brain remains relatively passive during childhood and/or adolescence, it will be much more difficult to develop these skills later when the brain is less flexible.

Dr. Jerre Levy, biopsychologist at the University of Chicago, said, "I suspect that normal human brains are built to be challenged and that it is only in the face of an adequate challenge that normal bihemispheric brain operations are engaged. To the extent that children commit time looking at TV, they're not spending time reading. When a child reads a novel, he has to self-create whole scenarios, he has to create images of who these people are, what their emotions are, what their tones of voice are, what the environment looks like, what the feelings of this environment is. These self-created scenarios are important, and television leaves no room for that creative process. It's just like muscles; if you don't exercise them they wither. If you don't exercise brains, they wither."

Dr. Sid Segalowitz, an authority on children's hemispheric development, commented, "When we look at slides of blood flow in the brain when kids are reading, we can see so many different areas lighting up at once. Good readers tend to use both left and right hemispheres, including the prefrontal systems."

Spending time with something that doesn't challenge their brains much could impinge on development of prefrontal executive functions, such as control of thinking, attention, and general planning skills, said Dr. Segalowitz.

Conclusion: Video Can Be Hazardous to Brains and Learning

The overall effects of television viewing and other forms of video on the growing brain are poorly understood, but research

Dear Parents, the following article is for your review:

Used by permission: National Organization of Child Development Laboratory Schools Newsletter, Winter, 1988

Cathy³

by Cathy Guisewite



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TOO MUCH TV????

Cathy is actually asking a very profound question. Does the TV or do parents influence children more significantly? Children watch nationally on the average of 4.7 hours of television per day. If a young child watches that much TV, attends a school for most of the day, eats dinner, takes a bath, then prepares for bed at a reasonable hour, when is there time for anything else—including parental influence? In terms of contact hours, perhaps children *are* being more significantly influenced by the television than by their parents.

The purpose of this article is to motivate parents to ask themselves this question: "Does my child spend too much time watching TV? The following information will share with you some of the research on the effects of too much television viewing on young children and provide some practical family viewing guidelines for parents to use at home.

The research is clear; children spend too much time watching television and television does affect children. The effects of television on your children can be grouped into three major areas: Aggression, learning, and toy selection.

1. Aggression: Children who view aggressive television tend to become more aggressive in their actions. In research studies, children who view aggressive television programs demonstrated more aggressive, antisocial behaviors in the classroom towards other children and other toys. These children also showed a decline in obedience, persistence, and tolerance for delay. Children who viewed prosocial television (e.g., Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, The Waltons) demonstrated increased cooperative play, increased nurturance for others, and greater verbalization of feelings.

Children are not sheltered from aggression and violence if they only view children's shows. Children's programs are perhaps the most violent and aggressive of all television programming since 98% of all cartoons contain some type of violence. Children's programs are actually six times more violent in acts/episode than adult television. As an example, one singular 30-minute program of Gobots reportedly had 83

acts of violence. While children's programs do not show realistic blood and violence, the play-like fantasy of slapstick, nothing is harmful, hurting or final, is more dangerous to children's developing understandings of what is real and unreal.

2. Learning: Young children are active, concrete learners. In order to learn children need opportunities to interact and act upon with real objects, to talk and communicate with real people, and to experience a variety of real events. Television is a passive oneway process. Children are truly "couch potatoes" as they sit passively absorbing "the tube" without the opportunity to interact.

Heavy television viewing has consistently been linked to low achievement scores on standardized tests. This finding is especially startling since it is coupled with the fact that it remains true despite parental income and occupation. Research studies also show that heavy viewers have lower creative verbal fluency scores and shorter attention spans. Studies surrounding Sesame Street show that gains in test scores are greatest when Sesame Street is combined with adult interaction not when just merely viewing Sesame Street. Interestingly, overall reading scores are nationally lower now than ever before even after twenty years of Sesame Street. Sesame Street alone does not make better readers.

3. Toy Selection: Any parent who has recently tried to walk down that cereal aisle at the local food market with their child has experienced the influence of advertising on young children. Young children are definitely affected by the marketing techniques in commercials. Recently, however, children are actually watching 30 minute commercials for various toy products because the ban that prohibited programing based on products has been lifted. As an illustration fo the effects of this phenomenon, the GI Joe doll, which now has its own TV show, has become the number one selling toy in America despite the fact that it has been on the market for twenty years. Currently over 40 toys are linked to TV programs. Industry says that it is

unthinkable to launch a new TV program without a product linked to it. Likewise, no toy company would launch a new major toy without some TV programs. Consequently this will limit innovative toys and programs for children.

Another problem is the proportion of children's programming and toy products that could be classified as war themes and war toys. Five out of six of the major selling toys are based on war themes. Research shows that playing with guns and war toys increase aggression and antisocial behavior in children's play. Because the violence and power associated with gun play feels so good to children, playing with guns merely reinforces the aggressive behaviors rather than "gets it out of their systems." Most children will pretend with guns at some point in their development as they try to figure out what guns mean. However, research shows that playing with a pretend gun (e.g., a stick or "Lego" gun) is less aggressive in nature and of less duration than when children play with realistic-looking guns.

What parents can do

1. *Limit television to less than one hour a day (including Saturday morning!).* With the busy, rushful lifestyle that most families engage in, families need to make the best of the time that they can spend together. encourage children to play. Interact and play together.

2. *Read to your child every day.* The best preparation that a parent can give a preschooler is to simply sit down and read to their child. Take your child to the library and select new books frequently. Encourage your child to "pretend" read to you. Point out symbols and print in their environment; e.g., store signs, product names, street signs. Give children opportunities to use language and letters in meaningful ways.

3. *Teach children that guns kill and violence hurts people.* Children need to understand what guns can really do. Just because children "like" these toys and programs does not mean that these toys and programs are good for children. Always watch TV with your child so that you can explain what is happening on the program. Watching TV with your child also makes viewing more interactive and less passive. Also give children a variety of toys for play. Limit toys that are violent and based on TV programs.

4. *Be in control of TV rather than allowing TV to control you.* Make wise selections for TV viewing. Some programs are excellent and probably should not be missed as learning opportunities. Don't, however, allow TV to become the electronic baby sitter. Don't allow TV to become a constant background noise or a constant dinnertime companion. Decide when TV is appropriate and when it is not. If concerned about the choices available on local TV stations, write and voice your opinion. Be in control of your TV viewing.

For more information the following resources are recommended:
Honig, A. (1983). Television and young children. *Young children*, 38, 63-76.
Liebert, R. et al. (1982). *The early window*. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press.
Trelease, J. (1986). *The read-aloud handbook*. New York: Penguin Books.
Winn, M. (1985). *The plug-in drug*. New York: Viking Press.
Yarrow, L. (1983). Should children play with guns? *Parents Magazine*, Jan.

Submitted by:

Dr. Marcy Gaddemi
Assistant Professor Early Childhood Education
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-51129
Title: Too Much TV???

TELEVISION: the enemy of learning

"Opinion" by Anthony O'Hear,
Professor of Philosophy,
Bradford University

We often hear alarming reports about numbers of children spending a third of their lives in front of television sets. Neither the irremediably poor quality of much of what is on television nor the essentially passive nature of the medium will help to produce alert, sensitive minds in the young; though how, short of banning transmissions for long periods of the day, anything could be done about this it is hard to say.

But it is not home television viewing which concerns me now. My complaint is rather about the use of television in schools. As a parent, I find it intensely irritating when, having prevented my children from watching television at home, I find they have been watching it at school.

But, it will be said, they watch only educational programmes, and what can be the harm in that? Moreover, are there not excellent programmes on the natural world, which expand the child's mind, and give it valuable experiences it would not otherwise have?

I will leave aside the fact that much educational television is about straightforward school topics such as elementary mathematics and hardly requires photography from far-flung corners of the globe. I will also overlook the endemic vulgarity attendant on television presentation, even of an educational sort. What I have difficulties with is the nature of television as a medium. In a strong sense, television is inherently anti-educational.

Socrates actually warned against the invention of writing, on the grounds that the written word might be anti-educational. Writing will lead men to rely on external marks, rather than on knowledge they have properly assimilated and taken into their hearts. Quaint as it might seem to many today, Socrates' warning does have a point. For it is the memory which forms the mental and spiritual landscape of each of us. Anything which deprives us of our powers of memory diminishes us as individuals.

But if the existence of writing can encourage us to be lazy about properly ingesting what is worth knowing, the written text does allow the reader space for reflection, imagination and contemplation. Television, by contrast, relentlessly and mechanically over-whelms the brain of the perceiver with flashing lights and electronic images and noise. Its very nature is to condition the viewer into a state of mental idleness in which he has the false impression of having learnt something.

This passivity can at times be appropriate, even pleasant, as when one watches Hill Street Blues, say, late at night (only half-remembering that one has seen the same episode already). But it is not the stuff of an educational engagement, in which the educator is seeking to promote in the pupil those very qualities of reflection, alertness and imagination which the medium conspires to stifle.

It is only when television apes something that it is not, such as a conversation or a lecture, that it can be educational. But one wonders why, in the presence of a live teacher, children have to watch images on a screen, images they cannot interrupt or question and which do not speak directly to them.

What, though, of the much-vaunted nature programmes? I fancy their educational value is slimmer than is often thought; certainly, I always have to refer later to a book to assimilate what they have said. They are, at most, a stimulus to education, not the thing itself.

Finally, it is often said that as children are familiar with television from home, it will help them at school if it is there, too. I say, on the contrary, that there is much to be said for giving school an atmosphere of seriousness absent from the home and, for that reason alone, for keeping television out of school.



The

Austin Waldorf School

Messenger

Minds at Risk: Is TV Detrimental to the Human Brain?

by Fredrick Case, *Seattle Times*: Is TV reversing the evolution of the human brain? At least one educational psychologist thinks so, and there is some evidence that supports her disturbing warnings.

"We're unwittingly rearing a generation of 'different brains,'" says Jane Healy, whose book *Endangered Minds, Why Our Children Don't Think* (Simon & Schuster) draws from the latest research into the neuropsychology of learning.

Healy says that electronic media, fast-paced life-styles, unstable family patterns, environmental hazards and faulty teaching methods seem to be *changing both the way children think and their actual brain structure.*

In fact, Healy says she believes we maybe witnessing the beginning of a radical change in the way humans process information. This, the Cleveland State University adjunct professor says, is a major phenomenon with profound implications for the future of our society.

Scientists say young brains are "plastic," and that what children see and do every day changes their brains functionally and structurally. Though even the adult human brain can be restructured--for example, to bypass a stroke-injured area--the early years are crucial because by age 7 the human brain attains 90% of adult weight. Some of our neural systems automatically execute basic routines, such as digestion. But humans also have large areas of uncommitted brain tissue that can mold itself to the demands of a particular environment.

Any activity that engages a student's interest and imagination can enrich the brain. However, says Healy, the large doses of TV viewing that are common in many day-care centers, schools and homes are just force-feedings of deadening junk food that contribute to lagging national academic skills.

Brandon Centerwall, a former Harborview (Wash.) Medical Center psychiatrist known internationally for his analysis of TV's role in crime and violence, calls Healy's book a "credible thesis." Though solid proof has been rare in the past, Centerwall says a Canadian investigation has now documented that both children and adults exposed to television suffered a 20% decrease in

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creativity. The Canadian researchers studied a small British Columbian town in the Rocky Mountains, near Banff, just before it got television for the first time and again two years later.

Pointing out that Americans are probably similarly affected by television viewing, Centerwall says: "It's interesting that this 20% loss in creativity corresponds to our 20% decline in average SAT scores in the past 20 or 25 years."

Centerwall says the University of British Columbia investigation by psychology professor Tannis MacBeth Williams was the "finest ever done" on TV's impact. Though the study was published in 1986 by Academic Press as a book called *The Impact of Television, a Natural Experiment in Three Communities*, Centerwall says it went generally unnoticed because it was written primarily for scientists. In addition to reduced creativity, the researchers discovered reduced persistence at problem solving, greater sex-role stereotyping, and a dramatic increase in verbal and physical aggressive behavior in both sexes.

In fairness, though television takes much blame for lowered educational results, no one has yet defined the long-term effects of other electronic factors such as stereo headphones vs. conversation, of computer games of drills vs. active social play, of videotapes vs. books. Yet, Healy says, it's clear that society appears to be increasingly illiterate—meaning that people know how to read, but instead choose to get their information from television. The United States now rates 24th worldwide in per-capita readership of books, and newspaper sales also are declining.

That's particularly disturbing to Healy in light of Russian neuropsychologist Alexander Luria's finding that learning language and "inner speech" feeds the development of the brain's frontal area. The back of the brain is the library; the front part is the planning and executive department.

Educators say reading test scores have nose-dived since the 1970s, diagnosed cases of learning disability increased 135% between 1976 and 1985, and one report says that hyperactivity now affects about one-third of American boys.

The problem Healy sees is that children in the modern electronic environment are constantly being stimulated from outside so they have little time to reflect and talk to themselves inside their heads. Indeed, one of the most serious charges leveled against TV viewing is that it robs children of the chance to develop their own mental pictures---the kind of visual imagery that helps in solving math and science problems.

A solution advocated by Yale University researcher Jerome Singer is to withhold TV completely until a child's reading and learning habits are well-established.

Mental habits become structures of the brain, which Healy says helps explain the growing number of "educational casualties"—meaning people categorized as being learning-disabled or having attention-deficit disorder.

With TV programs increasingly designed to attract attention by visual jolts, Healy says the child viewer gets in the habit of ignoring language in favor of frenetic visual and auditory gimmicks. Healy even denounces the "Sesame Street" children's program: "It's truly amazing that everyone seems to have bought the notion that the program will teach kids to read, despite the fact that the habits of mind necessary to be a good reader are exactly what 'Sesame Street' doesn't teach."

Meantime, Healy, who is consulting and lecturing while on university leave, continues her warnings about a subtle national peril. "If our society wants children who can come up with solutions to the problems of a complex world," she says, "we should tone down the electronics and tone up the brains."

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TV helps spawn epidemic of violence

AN Indiana school board had to issue an advisory to children, who had been crawling into storm drains, that there were no Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles down there. To understand why this was necessary is to understand one of the causes of America's epidemic of violence.

And the path to understanding that Indiana advisory can begin in a remote Canadian community that in 1973 (signal reception problems having been overcome) was due to acquire television. Social scientists seized the opportunity to investigate the effects of television on this community's children, using for comparison two similar towns that had long had television.

Before television was belatedly introduced, they monitored rates of inappropriate physical aggression among 45 first- and second-graders. After two years of television, the rate increased 100 percent, in both boys and girls, and in both those who were aggressive to begin with and those who were not. The rate in the two communities that had had television for years did not change.

Other researchers studied third-, fourth- and fifth-grade boys in two Indian communities in northern Manitoba. One got television in 1973, the other in 1977. The aggressiveness of boys in the first community increased immediately, in the second it increased four years later.

A study from 1960 to 1981 of 875 children in a semirural American county (controlled for baseline aggressiveness, intelligence and socioeconomic status) found that among persons subsequently convicted of crimes, the more television they had watched by age 8, the more serious their subsequent crimes. A "second generation effect" was that the more television a parent had watched as a child, the more severely that parent punished children.

Seven U.S. and Canadian studies es-

tablish correlations between prolonged childhood exposure to television and a proclivity for physical aggressiveness that extends from pre-adolescence into adulthood. All this is reported in the Public Interest quarterly by Brandon S. Centerwall, an epidemiologist at the University of Washington.

He used a historical oddity — because of disagreement between Afrikaner- and English-speaking South Africans, that nation had no television prior to 1975 — to study the effect of television on violence rates in the prosperous industrial society of white South Africans.

He studied homicide rates among white South Africans, white Americans and all Canadians. From 1945 to 1974 the white homicide rate in the United States increased 93 percent; in Canada, 92 percent; in South Africa, the white homicide rate declined 7 percent.

Neither economic growth, civil unrest, age distribution, urbanization, alcohol consumption, capital punishment nor the availability of firearms explain the short span between the introduction of television and the doubling of the homicide rate in the United States and Canada — or the similar lag in South Africa. Furthermore, Centerwall believes that the introduction of television helps explain different rates of homicide growth for American whites and minorities.

White households began acquiring television sets in large numbers approximately five years before minority households. White homicide rates began increasing in 1958. A parallel increase in minority homicide rates began four years later.

A 14-month-old infant can adopt behavior it has seen on television. Because young children are unable to distinguish fact from fantasy, they regard television as information about how the world works. (Hence the need for the Indiana school board's advisory.) And, Centerwall says, in the world as television presents it, violence is ubiquitous, exciting, charismatic and effective:

"In later life, serious violence is most likely to erupt at moments of severe stress — and it is precisely at such moments that adolescents and adults are most likely to revert to their earliest,

most visceral sense of the role of violence in society and in personal behavior. Much of this sense will have come from television."

So what can be done? Centerwall believes that violence is a public health problem deserving measures as practical as nutrition, immunization and bicycle helmet programs. He suggests requiring all television sets to be manufactured with locking devices by which parents can control children's access to a set or to particular channels. But such devices presuppose the sort of parents who would not need them: parents alert to the dangerous degradation of taste and behavior by entertainment saturated with violence.

Wiser parents are the only hope because, as Centerwall understands, there is no hope for cooperation from the television industry. It exists to draw audiences for advertisers. Desensitized Americans are attracted by ever stronger doses of ever more graphic violence. A decline of 1 percent of advertising revenues would cut the television industry's revenues a quarter of a billion dollars.

So as Centerwall says, it is as idle to expect television to help combat the epidemic of violence that is derivative from violent entertainment as it is to expect the tobacco industry to help combat the epidemic of lung cancer that is a comparable sign of that industry's sickening health.

Will is a Pulitzer Prize-winning syndicated columnist, based in Washington, D.C.



George F. Will

February 25, 1992

MARCHing OUT TV

During the month of March, Austin Montessori School challenges students, parents and staff members, to evaluate the role of television in our lives. The challenge is three-fold:

First, let us analyze our individual and family television habits. Some students on the elementary level will keep a viewing log for the month. A sample is enclosed, in case others wish to do the same.

In order to MARCH Out TV, we must "arm" ourselves with knowledge and alternatives. Time at school will focus upon creative leisure--away from the television set. Articles for review and family discussion will be sent home with children as well. Topics include ideas on how to spend hours regained from television.

Finally, let us make conscious, deliberate decisions about changes in television usage, where possible. As a follow up, tell us about the experiences which helped reduce television viewing, perhaps even removed it from daily life. Please send written comments to Amber so we can share struggles and rewards with one another. Thank you for your cooperation in MARCHing out TV!

TELEVISION - VIDEO - MOVIE - GAME LOG

Viewer:

DAY	DATE	TIME	PROGRAM *	VIEWED WITH WHOM?

TOTAL SCREEN TIME FOR THE WEEK: HOURS

* T=Television
V=Video
M=Movie
G=Game

Please, list other leisure activities engaged in this week,
(games, reading, letter writing, etc.):

Use a separate page for each week.

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May 14, 1992

Dear Austin Montessori School Families,

This is the last handout in the "MARCHing Out TV" series. It is a short questionnaire for parents to fill out regarding the campaign. In casual conversation, we hear people made conscious choices to eliminate family television viewing for the entire month. Others tell of dramatic changes in their viewing habits. We want to know what YOU did and thought about curbing television usage in your home--what worked successfully and what proved difficult. We plan to share comments with all parents once the data is compiled. Please take a few moments to respond. For each question, check as many answers as apply. THANK YOU!

1. TV or other topical handouts should be sent home:

- ☐ Twice per week
- ☐ Once per week
- ☐ Regularly over a one-month time period
- ☐ Over a three-month time period
- ☐ Every three years, over one entire academic year
- ☐ Less frequently--there were too many handouts to read

COMMENTS:

2. Articles most informative and enjoyable to read include:

- ☐ Weekly Record Forms for TV Viewing
- ☐ TV questions and answers from various sources (7 pages)
- ☐ "Television & The Child," by John Bodi
- ☐ Excerpts from Endangered Minds (2 pages on language, 4 pages on video and the growing brain)
- ☐ "Tune in to Your Child With TV," (Woman's Day)
- ☐ "Too Much TV????"
- ☐ "Television & Child Development," (England, TV Action Group)
- ☐ "Television: The Enemy of Learning" by Anthony O'Hear
- ☐ "TV Savvy" (Parent)
- ☐ "Minds at Risk" (Seattle Times, in AMS Newsletter)

COMMENTS:

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3. Discuss your family's response to the "MARCHing Out TV" challenge. (What action did you take? Was the support of the school helpful? How were children affected? Adults? What changes have resulted?)

"THINGS WE ENJOY DOING BESIDES WATCHING TV"

This is a list of wonder-filled activities suggested by students and staff at Austin Montessori School. Some ideas are followed by parenthetical clauses with catalogue names enclosed. These provide information about where appropriate tools or equipment may be ordered. In the "SOURCES" section at the end of this document, addresses, and phone numbers are given for catalogues referred to in the body of the text. Magazines for young people are also listed under "SOURCES."

The suggested activities often take parental initiation and periodic participation. They require the child's attention, focus and effort. They build intelligence and skill. After these activities a child feels refreshed and relaxed. Much of a child's whining, sulking, resentment, and fighting are the result of viewing TV. So, let us continue to march out TV by listening to what the children suggest as an alternative.

Activities are organized into categories for easy reference by family members. We recommend you place the list in a protective folder and keep it accessible to the children at home. THANK YOU!

ARTISTIC-CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Learn a new song, poem, or story and share it with others
Learn to sew, knit, crochet, or embroider
Make a collage, book, puppet, greeting card, or bead necklace
Write a poem, letter, or story
Sew doll clothes
Color with crayons (Hearth Song, Michael Olaf)
Invent a family ritual for a holiday
Press flowers or leaves (Michael Olaf)
Model with beeswax (Hearth Song)
Calligraph greeting cards
Paint, draw or work with clay

MUSICAL ACTIVITIES

Sing a song
Play the piano, harmonica or other instrument
Listen to operas, classical music or composer tapes (Michael Olaf)

GROOMING ACTIVITIES

Scrub, clip and buff your fingernails
Polish your shoes on a newspaper, wearing an apron
Take a shower or soak in the tub
Give a back, foot or head massage

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Play chase, horseshoes, croquet, softball, kickball, basketball, soccer, pitch and toss, hop scotch, ring toss or a "New Game" (Animal Town)
Hop on a pogo stick, walk on stilts, or jump on a trampoline
Skate on a skateboard, roller-skates or blades
Climb a tree, ride a bicycle or walk around the block
Swing, swim, hike, do gymnastics or other exercises
Juggle, play darts, or jump rope with rhymes (Animal Town)
Dig a deep hole
Do carpentry or work in a woodshop (see "Carpentry for Children," Animal Town)
Build a clubhouse (see "Housebuilding for Children," Animal Town)

THEME-NIGHT IDEAS

Family night
Bike, dance or exercise night
Cooking or baking night
Book, library or read-aloud night
Game or art night

GAME IDEAS

BOARD GAMES

Monopoly, Chess, Checkers, Chinese Checkers, Sorry, or Clue
Scrabble, Scrabble Junior or other word games
Global Pursuit or On Assignment (both from National Geographic)
Music Maestro or The Ungame (both from Animal Town)
By Jove, Passing Through The Netherworld, or Safari Adventure
Senet--Egyptian (Michael Olaf)
Manakala (Michael Olaf, Hearth Song, Animal Town)

CARD GAMES

U.S. Presidents, Inventors, Authors or Composers (Animal Town, Michael Olaf)
Nautilus, Predator, Constellation, Trees, State Flowers, or Pollination (Animal Town)
Lotto or Art Rummy (Michael Olaf)
Go Fish or Crazy Eights

OTHER GAMES

Dominoes, Pick-Up-Sticks, Puzzles or Schmuzzles
String games or jacks--fivesies, eggs in the basket, pigs in the pen
Marbles (see "Co-op Marble Games," Animal Town)

HELP-AT-HOME ACTIVITIES

AROUND THE HOUSE

Make beds, straighten shelves, clean and sort belongings
Sort and wash the laundry, fold sheets, towels, washcloths,
and your own clothes, iron napkins and handkerchiefs
Dust (8" wool duster in Michael Olaf Catalogue is perfect)
Rearrange furniture, change wall pictures or posters
Polish windows, mirrors, silver or brass items
Water houseplants, change the soil or add enrichments

IN THE KITCHEN

Cook a meal, set the table, and make special name cards
Bake bread, or whole wheat and olive oil biscuits
Make hors d'oeuvres, dips, cheese cubes or slices,
Clean, peel and slice cucumbers, radishes and other vegetables
Make school lunches, empty and wash out lunch boxes
Wash, wipe or put away dishes

IN THE YARD

Wash a car, bike, or pet
Walk the dog, groom the cat, clean the bird cage or fish tank
Work in the garden or yard, plant seeds, water, or pull weeds

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

WHILE ALONE

Play by the creek, in the woods, in the mud, water and sand
Explore the neighborhood, visit neighbors, go to a park or on
a fossil hunt
Make a map of your house, neighborhood or floor plan for
redecorating your room
Read a book, do homework, practice times tables, or write letters
Ask an old person to tell a story of long ago
Learn about tying knots or other roping arts
Work on the computer, stamp, coin, rock and shell collections
Play with pets, dolls, race cars, building sets, and other toys
Experience boredom
Note: Boredom is a fertile field. What can you plant in it?
Practice emptying the mind. Think of nothing. Remember a
story, a special event, a bad day. What could improve it?
Imagine yourself as someone or something else. Daydream.

WHILE WITH OTHERS

Have a tea party, put on a play, spend the night or tell stories
Play hide-and-seek, kick the can, or dress-up
Make an oatmeal box cradle, doll furniture out of match boxes,
or a clubhouse with boxes, chairs, sheets, and clothesline rope

RESOURCES

Catalogues with games, toys, ideas, and books include:

ANIMAL TOWN, P.O. Box 485, Herald'sburgh, CA 95448.
Phone 1-800-445-8642. "Nurturing children, family and
environment through cooperation."

ARISTOPLAY, LTD., P.O. Box 7028, Ann Arbor, MI 48107

HEARTH SONG, P.O. Box B, Sebastopol, CA 95743-0601.
Phone 1-800-325-2502. "A catalogue for families." (Waldorf
origins.)

MICHAEL OLAF, P.O. Box 1162, Arcata, CA 95521. "A guide and
catalogue for Montessori education from birth--at home and
school."

Magazines for young people include:

CLASSICAL CALLIOPE, 30 Grove St., Peterborough, NH 03458. World
history for young people, ages 9-14.

COBBLESTONE, 20 Grove St., Peterborough, NH 03458. The history
magazine for young people, ages 8-14.

CRICKET, Walnut Lane, Boulder, CO 80322.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, National Geographic Society, Washington,
D.C. 20036.

RANGER RICK/YOUR BIG BACK YARD, National Wildlife Federation,
8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, Virginia 22184-0001.

WORLD, National Geographic Society, 17th and M Streets N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20036.

MM 93-48

NEW YORK STATE EXPERIMENTAL
PRE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
SYDELLE BLATT
Acting Supervisor



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Gardner Avenue Extension
Middletown, N.Y. 10940
Phone (914) 341-5280
Fax (914) 343-0644

April 28, 1993

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street
Washington, DC 20554
Attn: Chairman James Quello

Dear Chairman Quello:

As parents of the Middletown Prekindergarten Program, we would like to voice our dissatisfaction with the level of programming available to our children. Even some cartoons are not educational but demonstrate force and violence in a manner inappropriate for children's viewing. An example, Ren & Stympe, is totally unacceptable.

Beside creative program content, an important improvement would be the timing of good educational programs. Late afternoons, early evening and weekend would be the most appropriate viewing time.

An example of a worthwhile educational program is Barney. It teaches parenting, manners, fire safety, counting, how to deal with strangers, share toys, get along with siblings. Other good examples are the age old Sesame Street, Mr. Rogers, and 321 contact.

We have other suggestions. We would like to see more choices that enrich children's lives like teaching another language, i.e. Spanish, teaching discipline and a sense of responsibility. We also think programs that teach parenting skills would be an important benefit to children and their families.

Sincerely,

Antoinette Tyrian Mother
Frank W. Tyrian Jr. Father

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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Dear Fcc,

As a 4th grader I believe that educational T.V. teaches you about math, how to count, the world and the dangers in the world and it teaches you other things you learn in school.

An example of educational television is The Discovery channel. This is an educational television program because it teaches you about animals, and about the world, and dangers in the world. An example of non educational television is G.I.J.O.E. This is not educational program because its not teaching you anything all it is are people shottimg at each other.

That is what I believe is educational T.V. and non educational programs.

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_____ 0 sincerely,

Kevin Evans

MM9348

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OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear FCC,
I think that educational is where they teach little kids how to count and spell and that is good for them. I think that a educational TV is when it shows you to not to do drugs and not to drink and it shows you what you need to now when you get older. And I think educational TV is when it shows you about wildlife and it shows you how animals eat and where they lived and they show you alot about wildlife. And I think educational TV is when it shows you how to read and the is great.

This is educational TV.

	ed	L	N

This is not educational

	ed	L	N

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This is educational

The reason that Sesame Street is educational because great for kids.

The reason I think that 90210 is educational is because it shows you what you might be like when you grow up. Or what you might do when you get to be a teenager.

The reason I think that the discovery channel is educational is because it shows you what animals eat and wear they live or if they are mean.

This is not educational

T-Z is not educational because it shows stuff that you should not see.

road runner is not educational
Because it's not teaching you anything.

Sincerely,

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20541

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Dear FCC,

I think the show should be more educational and let you kids to watch. Learning how to count, how to make friends or even what animals or history would be an art to show. This will help kids so they wouldn't watch the shows just because they like the show but they learn from the show. It's like a show that is not so good or maybe make that show a little ed. I made a chart of some ed shows a little so you can see the shows.

	ed	not
90210		
Fut House		
Discovery		
Jeopardy		
Bartley		
Camp Candy		
Thomson		
Rescue		
	Sometime	

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I chose 90210 for not an ed. show because 90210 does not teach any good learning skills.

I also chose Full house as a little ed. because Full house has some family problems and they go through without getting in big fights. They always make up.

I also have chose Discovery for an ed. show because Discovery teaches about animals and history.

Sincerely,
Holly
Walker.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

March 9, 1993
456 S. Main Street #12
Los Angeles, CA. 90013-1320

Mr. Alfred C. Sikes, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Sikes:

Greetings from Los Angeles.

I heard on one of the local Public Radio stations that the FCC would like to hear from the public concerning the content of children's television. Actually this letter will go to a number of different people.

The question is: what format, or formats, would be the most beneficial for children to see? I think there are several critically important formats for children to see on T.V. One format deals with Behavioral methods for solving problems that children encounter, especially physical abuse.

Children need to be exposed to as many Behavioral alternatives to violence as is possible. They need to see how the violent situations they may encounter can be experimented with on a behavioral level, that is, from a Behavioristic point of view, our most effective psychological point of view. It is absolutely imperative that children know they have a RIGHT to live in a violence-free environment. We need desperately to start addressing the very real problem of child abuse from a constructive point of view, educating parents about different options, as well as the rights of children not to be abused. As we all know physical abuse is THE major child problem in this society. Crime, welfare, and unemployment are just some of its tragic consequences. Television, the greatest educational tool ever invented, needs desperately to start talking about some of the more constructive and positive options available to children for transforming abusive situations. A more relevant format than that simply does not exist.

A second format deals with active ways for beautifying one's neighborhood, and of being of some service to others. After all, what best endures is the good done for others.

More children need to see on their T.V.'s other children improving their neighborhoods, children from all our economic strata, but

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